

Residents receive their cash back

A number of Cambridgeshire residents received their money back last month after unwittingly responding to scam mail. As part of the follow up work to reunite residents with their cash Cambridgeshire County Council officers are reminding people that scam mail can take many different forms. It's designed to look official or to befriend in order to con victims out of their money.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said "Residents should seek help if they have fallen victim to a scam and should not be embarrassed as scammers can be very devious. We want to stop the scam cycle. If people respond to a scam, then their personal details might be shared with other criminals, making it more likely that more scam mail will be received. We don't want to worry people, but we do want to help residents protect themselves and there are some simple steps that they can take - return any scam mail to the sender or put it in an envelope and send it to FREEPOST SCAM MAIL. Scams can also be reported to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040."

Earlier this month Cambridgeshire's Trading Standards officers joined forces with the National Trading Standards Scams Team, Police and Royal Mail to follow the trail of scams which trick residents into thinking they are due a big prize win if they pay a £5 administration fee or make a purchase from a treats catalogue. Envelopes containing cheques, cash or personal bank details were seized and sent to the relevant local authority to return to their residents.

For further details on scams visit www.thinkjessica.com<<http://www.thinkjessica.com>>

To report a scam contact Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 04 05 06 and Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or visit www.actionfraud.police.uk<<http://www.actionfraud.police.uk>>

Low income family? Don't forget to apply for free school meals

Free school meal applications mean extra money for schools. Families on low incomes have been encouraged to apply for free school meals in order to unlock more money for their child's school. From the start of this term, all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in England started to receive free school meals for the first time. However, schools still want parents on a low income to apply for free school meals in the traditional way, because it allows schools to receive significant extra funding, known as the Pupil Premium.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "Although in theory all young children can get free school meals, every primary school child who applies on the grounds of low income secures £1300 in additional funding for their school - the Pupil Premium. "If there are a few children in a village who don't apply in this way, it adds up to quite a lot of money that the school is missing out on - and this money has to go towards supporting these children to achieve. Coming forward and being 'counted in' is a really good thing to do for your child and their school. "This doesn't mean that children have to eat a school meal every day. As long as they apply by the end of September, the school can still get the funding. Also, none of the other children will know which families are eligible on the grounds of low income," he added.

Parents and carers can apply online for free school meals at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals<[/freeschoolmeals](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)>, or by calling 01223 703 200.

New sexual health service starts

Cambridgeshire's new Integrated Sexual Health and Contraception Service is being launched and will offer people a one stop approach at several venues across the county.

This new integrated service will mean service users accessing sexual health services can have their contraception needs met in the same location. People will no longer have to make separate sexual health and contraception clinic appointments.

The new service, launched on 1 October, will also mean that users will be able to access the full range of services throughout the county with central clinics being run in Wisbech, Cambridge City and Huntingdon. Smaller clinics will create a network of services across the county.

There will be one central telephone number to make an appointment at any of the clinics across the county which will not only make it easier but it also means that patients have access to a number of clinics to book an appointment. Easy and quick access to sexual health services is essential to ensure that people can receive immediate treatment and avoid any possible spread of sexual health infections.

Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for commissioning open access Sexual Health and Contraception Services. It recently awarded the contract to run this new service to Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust (CCS). The general Sexual Health Service currently provided by Cambridge University NHS Hospital Foundation Trust at Addenbrooke's Hospital will transfer to the new Service and be located at new premises in the City.

Although users will still see the same staff who will be transferring to CCS as part of the Service. The service will also provide information and support on all aspects of sexual health and HIV, free condoms through the Condom Card scheme, and confidential chlamydia tests to young people through the chlamydia screening programme.

HIV treatment and care services currently provided by CCS NHST Trust and Addenbrookes hospital are not affected and will remain in their current locations.

Anyone wishing to contact the Integrated Contraception and Sexual Health Service - which is confidential and open to all - can do so by ringing 0300 300 30 30 or can access further information at www.icash.nhs.uk or www.sexualhealthcambs.nhs.uk

Local Government Boundary Commission

The decision on council size for Cambridgeshire has been delayed until the Commission meeting on 21st October 2014. The reason given is that the team needs more time to consider the information provided by the Council. It has been confirmed that the aim is to start the first round of consultation on division patterns on 28th October 2014. More information from the Commission will follow in November.

A14 Update

The Highways Agency will be presenting to County Councillors next month the latest forecasts showing the traffic impacts of the A14 Improvement Scheme and their traffic modelling team will be available to discuss the results.

CCC and Police back pledge to Stop Suicide

Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary are supporting a campaign to prevent suicide by backing a pledge supporting staff. The backing of the pledge coincides with Mental World Health Day on 10 October and is part of the local STOP Suicide campaign.

The Stop Suicide campaign aims to build awareness about how everyone can play their part to prevent suicide in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is being led by three local charities Mind in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & Fenland Mind and Lifecraft. By signing the Stop Suicide Organisational Pledge Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary are pledging to:

- promote the STOP Suicide message throughout their organisations;
- encourage staff to sign up to the personal STOP Suicide Pledge;
- encourage staff to be open and honest when life gets difficult;
- encourage staff to reach out to others if they are worried about them.

STOP Suicide aims to prevent suicide across all communities by encouraging the public to be aware of the suicide warning signs, to ask directly about suicide if they are worried about someone and support those at risk to get help.

A new website, www.stopsuicidepledge.org has been set up to provide people with key information, guidance and free resources to help prevent suicide and how to help someone you know. Organisations and individuals are being asked to make the STOP Suicide pledge, carry the STOP Suicide Pledge card and wear the 'I'd Ask' badge.

Stop Suicide is funded by NHS England and is supported by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cambridgeshire County Council's Public Health Team.

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Bin your Bra for Charity

Women across Cambridgeshire have the chance to raise money for Breast Cancer research and help women in Africa by donating their old, unwanted or unloved bras starting this October.

Local authorities in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership are supporting the charity Against Breast Cancer by launching a 'Bin your Bra' campaign during Breast Cancer Awareness month. The councils have permanently installed an additional 30 banks across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at places like council offices, leisure centres, libraries and some retailers.

The councils are supporting the charity Against Breast Cancer who will receive £1,000 for every tonne of bras collected. Bras will go to small businesses in Africa where affordable bras are in short supply.

This 'Bin your Bra' is part of a wider campaign to raise awareness that all unwanted textiles can be recycled no matter what condition they are in. Over £140 million worth of clothing gets dumped in landfill sites each year.

Even if it's on its last legs it can still be recycled. Worn out clothes, stained fabrics, misshaped tops, old underwear and odd shoes can be recycled and turned into new clothes, padding for furniture or even speakers. It's not just clothes – towels, blankets, curtains and other textiles can be recycled, just take them to your nearest clothing bank.

To find out more visit www.recap.co.uk/recap/

For more information on RECAP contact Maggie Pratt, Lead Officer for Policy and Communications Maggie.Pratt@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or 01223 715462

More information on love your clothes campaign can be found on <http://loveyourclothes.org.uk/about-love-your-clothes/>

Change in free childcare eligibility

More 2-year-olds now eligible for free childcare

A change in national criteria means more 2-year-olds in Cambridgeshire will be eligible for free childcare at the start of the new school year.

From this month, the eligibility also includes:

- * Children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- * Children who have a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- * Children who are working with Early Support and have complex needs requiring on-going specialist support.

Cambridgeshire County Council already includes families in receipt of Working Tax Credit - who previously were not entitled - as long as household income is still less than £16,190, as well as a range of families in receipt of other income related benefits. Many families receiving Working Tax Credit are likely to be paying for childcare already, so it can save them money or allow them to work more hours.

Nationally, this will mean that 40 per cent of two-year-olds will be eligible for free childcare, which will support the development - and ultimately school readiness and achievement - of these children. In Cambridgeshire, the figure is around 26%, or 2,000 children at any one time..

This free childcare will also help ease financial pressures for parents, give parents time to look for work, take up training or work more hours.

Children who are eligible can receive free childcare from the start of the school term after their second birthday. The hours can be taken as 15 hours a week, every week, during school term time. In some childcare settings the free hours can be spread more evenly throughout the year - fewer hours a week over more weeks, up to a maximum of 570 hours a year.

Archaeological excavations on show.

Residents last month had the opportunity to learn about the archaeological excavations taking place on the Northstowe Phase I site. Work started in June to strip topsoil off the areas of greatest archaeological potential and examination of what has been revealed so far is underway.

The main focus of the excavation so far has been an area of Saxon settlement located on what will become the primary school site. At least 15 post built structures have been found along with pits, wells and ditches containing pottery dating to the early Saxon period.

The Open Day include guided tours to view the Saxon archaeology, a display of some of the artefacts discovered so far and information about what else is likely to be found as the work progresses.

More articles in the news archive <<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/archive>>

A428/A421 Improvement Alliance Objectives

To build a compelling case for improvements to the route to support economic growth, locally and nationally.

To work with the Highways Agency to develop a comprehensive improvement package and associated investment plan, which will:

Address current capacity constraints.

Provide capacity for future growth and prosperity.

Improve safety.

Improve the reliability of journey times.

To work together to make the case for improvements to Government.

The Alliance wish to declare ourselves and those we represent as an alliance dedicated to improvements to the A428/A421 corridor, to facilitate and accommodate growth in what is the fastest growing economy in the country. We represent not simply local interests, as areas of growth which must combine development with sustainability and a decent living environment for our citizens, but also express our recognition of the regional and national significance of a key route for the nations prosperity. Whilst understanding the pressures on resources, we make clear our intention to urge attention to this corridor as a national priority and commit ourselves to continue working upon this together until such time as our local, regional and national objectives have been addressed.

COMMITTEE AGREES PLAN TO TACKLE BUSWAY DEFECTS

Councillors have agreed unanimously to accept legal and technical expert advice which is to hold Busway contractor BAM Nuttall to account for around £31 million of defects. At their meeting, held last month, the cross party General Purposes Committee, heard independent advice that there is a good case to have the defects fixed and paid for by the contractor.

The Busway remains a successful transport system with millions of journeys on it since it was opened. The Committee heard that the Busway is being carefully monitored with defects being corrected as necessary to ensure the Busway remains safe. The defects effect ride quality and if left could mean this would continue to deteriorate.

The Committee agreed that the defects should be tackled subject to the contractor paying for the work.

The report outlines that some parts of the Busway were either not built to the agreed design or don't comply to national standards specified in the contract.

Defects include

- Shims and neoprene pads were put in without being fixed so they now slip and cause movement of the beams, affecting ride quality and requiring regular resetting.

- Foundations were not deep enough as outlined in national guidelines on certain sections so they could move in the clay conditions.
- Inadequate drainage at two locations
- Joints between the guideway beams that were too narrow to allow for thermal expansion of the beams.
- Beams not being restrained enough by brackets so they move.

Councillors heard legal advice that this is a breach of contract and that the Council has a good case and should pursue the contractor for the money topay for the necessary repairs.

The report outlined advice on the best way to recoup the costs and how best to tackle the defects along the Busway.

Officers recommended that a programme of works should start to rectify the problems subject to being paid for by the contractor. This could be done in stages with sections closed one at a time and bus services diverted between the unaffected stretches of guideway.

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Steve Count, Chairman of General Purposes Committee, said: "The cross party committee agreed unanimously that these defects were created or left by the contractor and they should be fixed. They also looked at the good legal case we have and supported the Council holding Bam Nuttall to account for the costs. The Busway is a highly successful transport system that reached its passenger targets early and is used for millions of journeys. We have fixed some of the defects as the advice is not to leave them otherwise the situation will deteriorate leading to more costs and disruption in the long term."

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GREEN LIGHT FOR COUNCIL TO GRANT ELY SOUTHERN BYPASS PLANS

Planning permission for a new Ely Southern Bypass can be given by Cambridgeshire County Council the Secretary of State has ruled.

Proposals to build the bypass for Ely had been backed unanimously by Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Committee this month.

But permission could not be granted for the 1.7km long road, linking Angel Drove to Stuntney Causeway, until the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP, decided whether he wanted to determine the plans himself.

The County Council has now received a letter on his behalf saying that the decision should be made locally.

The Planning Committee granted planning permission subject to the decision made by the Secretary of State after he had issued a so called 'holding decision.' The formal permission is now due to be granted.

The bypass aims to reduce journey times between A10 and Stuntney Causeway by 56 per cent and reduce delays for motorists leaving the station by 50 per cent at peak times. Closing the level crossing will also mean more freight can travel by rail.

Local County Councillor and Chairman of the Planning Committee, said: "This is good news for localism and even better news for Ely which has for years had to put up with this congested and accident blighted crossing. The new bypass will help boost the local economy and mean that this important station gateway to the City can be improved. I would like to thank the Secretary of State for listening to local arguments about the importance of this bypass and the need for it to be determined locally. We will now get on and build this vital road as soon as possible."

Work will now start on a detailed design ready to appoint a contractor to build the scheme.

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To give your points of view on any of these issues, contact me by email at; j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com

As Your County Councillor I welcome hearing from you on these and/or any other issues that affect our community."

Yours John Reynolds

**County Report October 2014
Councillor John Reynolds**

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